

NEW LEAF

A CREATION CARE AND STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER



Becoming Advocates for Reconciliation

How do we turn our privilege into advocacy? Canon Tom Mugford, the Diocesan Canon for Indigenous Ministries and Advocacy, shares with us how we can meaningfully engage in the work of Reconciliation. Read the sermon he preached to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:

“My friends in Christ, On September 29th, many congregations gathered not just to worship, but to reflect on the journey of truth, reconciliation, and healing. As we commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we are called to consider the painful legacy of residential schools in Canada— institutions that took Indigenous children from their families, their language, their culture, and, in many cases, from life itself. This day reminds us of the suffering endured by First

Nations, Métis, and Inuit, and challenges us to commit ourselves to justice, healing, and reconciliation.”

The words of the prophet Micah ring true: “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) Justice, mercy, and humility—these are not passive words. They are calls to action, calls to examine our hearts, our history, and our relationships with Indigenous peoples.”

For far too long, the history of residential schools was hidden from many, particularly in our churches. This painful chapter is not just a historical footnote; it is a present reality. The intergenerational trauma caused by these schools continues to affect Indigenous families and communities today. And as followers of Christ, we are called not to turn away but to face this reality with humility and love.”

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Christ's command in John's Gospel to "love one another" (John 15:12) is a radical love—one that goes beyond words and prayers. It is a love that is willing to lay down one's own privileges, comforts, and assumptions for the sake of others. It is a love that compels us to listen to the stories of residential school survivors, to hear their pain, and to stand in solidarity with them as they seek justice."

But what does this look like in practice? How do we, as members of the Anglican Church, participate in the work of reconciliation?"

First, we must educate ourselves. As Christians, we must be willing to learn the full truth about the history of colonization and the role that churches played in it. We cannot shy away from uncomfortable truths. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has given us 94 Calls to Action, many of which are directed at the church. These are not suggestions; they are responsibilities placed before us, to help restore relationships with Indigenous peoples."

Second, we must acknowledge our collective responsibility. This is not about guilt—it's about accountability. As Christians, we confess that we have not always lived out Christ's love in our relationships with Indigenous peoples. We have benefitted from systems of oppression and injustice. Yet, God calls us to repentance—a turning away from old ways and moving towards healing and justice. The work of reconciliation requires that we be active in dismantling the systemic injustices that continue today."

Third, we must be people of hope. In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul reminds us that

God has "given us the ministry of reconciliation." While the wounds of the past run deep, we serve a God who heals, who reconciles, and who makes all things new. We cannot change the past, but we can be part of God's transformative work in the present. We can stand with Indigenous communities, support their rights, their sovereignty, and their culture. We can advocate for the implementation of the TRC's Calls to Action, particularly those that address the ongoing need for justice and healing for survivors of residential schools."

Finally, we must pray. But let our prayers not just be for comfort or for absolution. Let our prayers be ones that seek God's guidance in how we can actively contribute to reconciliation. We can pray for the courage to confront our own biases, to ask for forgiveness, and to take meaningful action in solidarity with Indigenous peoples."

As we commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, let us reflect on these questions: What does reconciliation mean for us as individuals? What does it mean for our church? And how can we embody the love of Christ in our relationships with Indigenous communities?"

The path of reconciliation is not an easy one. It requires humility, courage, and a willingness to be uncomfortable. But it is the path we are called to walk as disciples of Jesus. And as we do so, we trust in God's promise of restoration and hope for all of creation. Amen."

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

Read:
Galatians 6:9

Ask:
Many take great joy out of the (substantial) effort involved in cooking a holiday meal, while others just feel exhausted. Do you take joy in the effort required to care for people and the environment? Why or why not?

Advocating for change takes time and energy, and often the change doesn't happen quickly. When you work towards change, do you feel exhausted or invigorated? Why do you feel one way more than another?

Pray:
As you pray this week, reflect on how you view your efforts to care for Creation and advocate for positive change within your family or community (or even more broadly). Consider asking for the strength to persevere, or the courage to shift your perspective.

Meet FANE: An organization for “Ecological Conversion”

By: Amber Tremblett

At the beginning of December, I had a zoom chat with Dr. Barry Stephenson, member of the Board of Directors of For A New Earth (FANE), a Newfoundland-based organization that seeks to respond to the climate crisis through “ecological conversion.” Dr. Stephenson explained “ecological conversion” as “addressing problems with consciousness, addressing how we think about these problems beyond the need for technical kinds of approaches.” For FANE this means fostering an understanding of natural, spiritual, and cultural ecology.

The folks at FANE are strong advocates for acknowledging the equal importance of the arts and scientific knowledge to addressing the climate crisis. Dr. Stephenson said, “we're interested in what art, music, liturgy, ritual, film... what role these play in affecting change of consciousness.”

In alternate years, FANE hosts a Field School, which focuses on education in local contexts, and a Symposium which brings together community partners for discussion. These events prioritize involvement in local contexts and problem solving at the community level. Dr. Stephenson explained why they prioritize localism: “The kinds of community organizations that you're involved with and that we or others are involved with, those need to really be nourished, right? Because we need to learn how to work together and talk about issues together and find solutions together instead of always relying on

the upper levels of political action and policies and legislation.”

When I asked Dr. Stephenson what we can do to support FANE in their work, it's no surprise that his answer continued to encourage local, grassroots work. He said, “Find ways to become involved at the local level with community organizations or church organizations, not-for-profits that are doing similar kinds of work. And then try to follow what these people are doing and show up. Showing up is sort of half the battle. So, try to become more aware of what's going on locally and, in our province, and show support through actual direct attendance or through showing up to online events. We need to try to build a groundswell of interest and a belief that we can actually make some sort of difference. It's embracing a hopeful posture without being, naively optimistic.”

We are so grateful for the work FANE does to change the climate consciousness in our communities and we will continue to follow them on their journey! To learn more about FANE visit their website:
<http://www.foranewearth.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you are planning any Creation Care events in your parish, or there are relevant community events you believe our parishes should know about, please email the team at creationcare@anglicanenl.net.

Ethical Investing: Inside AJI

Each edition of New Leaf profiles an interesting Creation Care story from one of the parishes in the Diocese. This time, we connected with Fred Marshall, the (Tri-Diocesan) Joint Committee Officer, to learn more about how the Ethical, Social & Governance (ESG) principle of investing is being used within Anglican Joint Investments (AJI) – AJI is the common investing pool in which all Diocesan parishes participate.

According to BMO Nesbitt Burns, the AJI fund manager, ESG criteria are used by socially-conscious investors to measure a company's sustainability and ethical impact. Environmental (E) criteria focus on environmental concerns, such as a company's carbon footprint. Social (S) criteria focus on social relationships, such as employee treatment and human rights matters. Governance (G) criteria consider how executives and boards of directors manage companies, including issues of gender diversity.

The AJI management committee and its portfolio managers at BMO Nesbitt Burns have been upholding ESG

principles within AJI for many years. In fact, the AJI management committee has occasionally requested changes to how AJI funds are invested in order to better align the investments with values of the three NL Diocese (Western, Central, and Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador). For example, the committee has pulled investments from a big-box retail company which sells firearms, as well as a grocery store company which used harsh tactics during a labour dispute. The AJI management committee regularly reviews investment decisions – and meets with its portfolio managers twice each year – to ensure that AJI funds have been invested in line with the committee's values, as well as the Anglican Church of Canada's guide Investment with a Mission: A Guide to Responsible Investment and Church Funds. While the Joint Committee may not be the first committee we think of when it comes to having opportunities to make climate and justice conscious decisions, every form of ministry in our church is guided by the call to be good stewards of God's creation and God's people.

FIND OUR MORE ABOUT AJI AND ETHICAL INVESTING BY CONTACTING REV. FRED MARSHALL



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